

THE ANGEL OF PEACE

and urged them to send ambassadors to him as soon as he should have arrived at Rome. They besought her to come again to Florence, to give a formal account of her legation and appease the minds of the Parte Guelfa ; this, however, Catherine refused to do, as compromising the dignity of the Church after what had passed at Avignon, though she ultimately consented to send Stefano Maconi in her stead. When he arrived at Florence, Niccolo Soderini, Piero Canigiani, and Stoldo di Bindo Altoviti (a prominent member of the Parte Guelfa, who played a considerable part in the internal politics of the Republic) accompanied Stefano to the Eight, to whom he delivered Catherine's message, detailing all that had been done in Avignon and urging them to make peace. But a rumour spread through the city that " a certain Catherinated Sienese " was inducing the Eight to subject the government to the Pope ; a tumult was raised, " so that not otherwise than of old the Jews gnashed on the blessed levite Stephen with their teeth, so did many of the people with murderous fury upon our Stephen, and they would without doubt have assailed him, had not the authority of most influential men intervened."¹ Nevertheless, Stefano's biographer assures us, his words had not been lost. But events were to render all immediate prospects of peace out of the question.

Almost all the States of Italy, even those at war with the Holy See, sent ambassadors to congratulate the Pope on his arrival. The Sienese were also charged with the task of making excuses for their having joined the league, and of obtaining from the Pope the restitution of Talamone, which had been seized by the prior of the Pisan knights of St. John with aid from the Church. With them went Tommaso di Guelfaccio, the Gesuato, bearing a letter from Catherine to the Pontiff, once more exhorting him to make peace with the Tuscan communes and the revolted cities, for the pacification of all Italy. By love alone can he hope to win the souls of the Italians.

¹ Barth. Senensis, *op. cit.*, Lib. I. cap. 8. This is our only authority for this embassy, which, from the wording of Catherine's answer, was evidently while the Pope was at Corneto.